



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

6 ILLEGAL GANG MEMBERS ARRESTED BY ICE DURING FESTIVAL

“Among the arrested was a 23-year-old violent Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang member”

CHARLOTTE, NC—Six dangerous illegal aliens, hard-core members of violent street gangs, were arrested here last weekend by special agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and officers assigned to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department’s gang unit.

Twenty-one-year-old Edwin Laines-Barrera, a citizen of Honduras and a member of the violent “Mara Salvatrucha” (MS-13) street gang was among those arrested here during a local festival. Laines-Barrera had been ordered deported by an immigration judge but refused to obey the order and opted to hide instead.

Also arrested were five Mexican nationals identified as members of various street gangs. All are in the country illegally and have been placed into administrative removal proceedings.

“This was a cooperative proactive enforcement action initiated to stop any possible altercations between rival gangs during a large public gathering,” said Jeffery Jordan, assistant special agent-in-charge in North Carolina. “Gang members who think that they will terrorize our community must think twice. North Carolina’s law enforcement community is working closer than ever to find you and deport you.”

All of those arrested are in ICE custody at the Mecklenberg County Jail awaiting the outcome of their cases.

These arrests are all part of “Operation Community Shield” an ICE anti-gang initiative launched in March of this year to target members of the MS-13 gang. To date, ICE special agents and their federal, state, and local counterparts have arrested more than 300 MS-13 members nationwide.

Operation Community Shield is designed to disrupt and dismantle violent gang organizations and prosecute their members by employing the full range of authorities and investigative tools available

to ICE. Under this initiative, ICE is employing its broad immigration authorities, both criminal and administrative, against gang members.

Operation Community Shield draws on strong partnerships and cooperation with existing federal, state, and local anti-gang efforts. Such partnerships are essential to the success of the initiative and to ensure officer safety during operations.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.